

Casitas Dam Update

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This newsletter is designed to keep neighbors of Casitas Dam informed about construction and related issues. It will be published as needed throughout the project.

When you have questions regarding the status of work at the dam, truck traffic, or other concerns, please call the general information line:
805/641-9494



E.P. Foster Students Meet Ready Freddy

Elementary students in grades K through 5 welcomed Officer John Turner and "Ready Freddy" at E.P. Foster School at two assemblies on September 22 to learn about emergency preparedness. Each child received two Ready Freddy backpacks for home and for school to fill with emergency supplies.

School principal, Silvia Camiel, introduced the first speaker at the assembly, Officer Turner of the Ventura Police Department who talked to the kids about the project to strengthen Casitas Dam. The theme of the assembly was the "character trait of the week" -- responsibility. The students asked many thoughtful questions, ranging from -- "Will we need life-jackets in our backpacks if the Dam breaks?" (No, we will get out of the way of the water) to "Why can't we use our backpacks for other stuff?" (Because it's a "Grab & Go" bag that's ready to use when you need it).

Officer Turner explained to the children that routes have been planned for them to reach higher ground, should a flood emergency occur while they are at school. Many children were concerned that their parents know how to find them after an emergency. They were given the assurance that safe areas were designated for families to find each other.

Ready Freddy was another highlight of the assembly which he attended with trainer/pal Debra from Ojai-based National Disaster Search Dog Rescue Foundation. Debra explained to the children why the friendly Black Labrador is called "Ready" Freddy -- because he wears his very own "Grab & Go" backpack! Ready Freddy and Debra demonstrated what was in his pack -- drinking water, extra food, a chew toy and medicine.

Finally, Officer Turner gave the children a homework assignment of helping the family fill their backpacks and to be responsible for checking it every Sunday night.

Flyers were sent home with the children with a list of suggestions for the contents of the "Grab & Go" emergency kit.

Construction Night Shift Begins at the Dam

Beginning September 27, a night shift for the construction crew was added Monday through Friday, 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., to the existing 12 hour day shift. This additional shift will allow key stages in the Casitas Dam modification to be completed by the end of the year and before the rainy season commences.

Noise levels at night are required to be kept at lower levels than daytime shifts for the comfort of nearby residents. Lighting will be directed toward the dam only. No truck hauling will occur at night, and crews will be escorted by van-pool up Casitas Vista Road at the start and end of each shift.

Construction activities are proceeding as scheduled. The widening of the crest, replacement of poor foundation materials and partial construction of the berm are expected to be completed in December 1999.



Kinko's Takes Ready Freddy for a Walk!

Several hundred employees at Kinko's Corporate Headquarters on Stanley Avenue gave Ready Freddy a warm welcome at their employee meeting on Friday, September 17.

Kinko's manager Greg Lowe introduced Matt Sheskier and Bill Pennington from the Bureau of Reclamation and Mike Lavery, Assistant Fire Chief for the City of Ventura to discuss the Casitas Dam modification project. Ready Freddy showed off his new backpack to employees, who would also be receiving "Grab & Go" kits featuring his name and likeness. Over 800 backpacks were distributed to Kinko's employees.

After the meeting, folks feasted on burritos. Following lunch, about fifty employees, family members and Ready Freddy left for a "fun walk" designed around an evacuation route provided by local authorities.

Letter from Bill Pennington Project Manager Bureau of Reclamation Casitas Dam Modification Project

Many residents in the City and County areas of Ventura are concerned that Casitas Dam will somehow be less safe during construction. Reclamation wants to assure people that this is not true and that the risk of failure during construction is considered lower than it was before we started the project.



It is important to keep in mind the reason for the project to strengthen the Casitas Dam. We know that this region is seismically active, and the risk of a significant earthquake exists. We also know how to build stronger dams based on what we've learned about how earthquakes affect dams and reservoirs. The good news is that we have the knowledge to make existing dams even better.

Key to lowering the risk of failure has been the installation of the dewatering system—a series of pumps which have removed most of the water in the downstream foundation. We need to keep this area dewatered so that we can excavate and replace the liquefiable foundation material. Without the dewatering system in place, a severe earthquake could shake the ground material until it loses its ability to remain solid.

Casitas Springs Learns about Project

Over 50 residents filled the Casitas Springs Community Center September 30 for an informational meeting. Jay Bayman from the County of Ventura Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services discussed evacuation plans and emergency preparedness. "The plans all involve an element of self-preservation, personal responsibility, and thinking things through," he said. Project updates were also provided by Matt Sheskie and Bill Pennington of the Bureau of Reclamation.

Excavation has progressed to bedrock and will likely be completed over the next two weeks. Specialized soil will then be installed and compacted to form a filter to control seepage. Backfilling will begin in mid-October and will reach the level of the original streambed by mid-December. The remainder of the berm buttressing the dam is scheduled to be completed by summer 2000.

We want people to know that we're taking precautions while excavating at the toe of the dam. The siren system installation has been completed and is operational. In addition, inspectors are on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to monitor the dam.

"Grab & Go" Kit Checklist



Ready Freddy with trainer Debra
of the National Disaster Search
Dog Foundation

Ready Freddy wants to make sure you know just what to do in case of a flood emergency, so he made up this list of things your family needs to put into your very own GRAB & GO Kit.

First Aid Kit & Book
Bottle of Drinking Water
Food: Packaged, Canned, & No-cook;
Food for Special Diets
Non-Electric Can Opener
Portable Radio, Flashlight & Spare Batteries
Essential Medications
Cash & Change
Baby Supplies
Large Plastic Trash Bags for Trash, Waste, &
Water Protection
Bar Soap & Liquid Detergent

Toilet Paper
Household Bleach
Sturdy Shoes
Extra Pair of Eyeglasses
City Map
Candles & Matches
Communication Kit: Paper, Pens, & Stamps
Toys for Children
Screwdriver, Pliers, Hammer, Knife
Rope
Plastic Tape
Heavy Gloves

The idea is to keep your kit easy to carry and easy to find!

Ready Freddy says:

DON'T BE SCARED,

BE PREPARED!

